

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (original) An associated complex comprising α -glycosyl α,α -trehalose and a metal ion compound.

2. (original) The associated complex of claim 1, wherein said metal ion compound is one or more compounds selected from metal salts.

3. (currently amended) The associated complex of claim 1-~~or 2~~, wherein said metal ion compound is one or more ~~compounds selected from inorganic salts.~~

4. (currently amended) The associated complex of claim 3, wherein said inorganic salt comprises a ~~metal element~~ ion of divalent or more as greater metal cation, and one or more inorganic anions as anion.

5. (currently amended) The associated complex of claim 3~~or 4~~, wherein said inorganic salt comprises calcium ion.

6. (currently amended) The associated complex of ~~any one of claims~~ claim 3 to 5, wherein said inorganic salt is calcium chloride.

7. (currently amended) The associated complex of ~~any one of claims~~ claim 3 ~~to 6~~, wherein the molar ratio of said inorganic salt to said α -glycosyl α,α -trehalose is about one.

8. (original) The associated complex of claim 3, wherein said inorganic salt comprises one or more cations selected from the group consisting of magnesium ion, strontium ion, copper ion, ferrous ion, manganese ion, and nickel ion.

9. (currently amended) A crystalline associated complex of ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 ~~to 8~~.

10. (original) The crystalline associated complex of claim 9, which is formed from α -glycosyl α,α -trehalose and calcium chloride.

11. (original) The crystalline associated complex of claim 10, wherein the molar ratio of said calcium chloride to said α -glycosyl α,α -trehalose is about one.

12. (original) A crystalline associated complex of α -glycosyl α,α -trehalose and calcium chloride, which has main diffraction angles (2θ) of 12.6° , 19.8° , 21.3° , and 22.0° on powdery X-ray diffraction analysis.

13. (original) A process for producing an associated complex of α -glycosyl α,α -trehalose and a metal ion compound, which comprises the steps of:

forming an associated complex of α -glycosyl α,α -trehalose and a metal ion compound by mixing said α -glycosyl α,α -trehalose with said metal ion compound; and

collecting the resulting associated complex.

14. (original) The process of claim 13, wherein said α -glycosyl α,α -trehalose and said metal ion compound are mixed in a solution.

15. (currently amended) The process of claim 13-~~or 14~~, wherein said metal ion compound is calcium salt.

16. (original) The process of claim 15, wherein said calcium salt is calcium chloride.

17. (currently amended) The process of ~~any one of claims claim 13 to 16~~, which comprises the steps of:
crystallizing said associated complex from a solution;
and
collecting the resulting crystal.

18. (original) A method for forming an associated complex of α -glycosyl α,α -trehalose and a metal ion compound by mixing said α -glycosyl α,α -trehalose with said metal ion compound.

19. (original) The method of claim 18, wherein said α -glycosyl α,α -trehalose and said metal ion compound are mixed in a solution.

20. (currently amended) The method of claim 18-~~or~~
19, wherein said metal ion compound is calcium salt.

21. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein said
calcium salt is calcium chloride.

22. (currently amended) A composition comprising
the associated complex of ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 8
together with another component.

23. (currently amended) A composition comprising
the crystalline associated complex of ~~any one of claims~~ claim
9 to 12.

24. (currently amended) The composition of claim 22
~~or 23~~, which is a food, cosmetic, or pharmaceutical.

25. (currently amended) The composition of ~~any one~~
~~of claims~~ claim 22 to 24, wherein said composition is a member
selected from the group consisting of mineral-extender,
mineral-supplying agent, taste-improving agent, bean curd
(tofu)-coagulating agent, moisture-retaining agent,

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26. (original) An agent comprising α -glycosyl α,α -trehalose as an effective ingredient, selected from the group consisting of an unpleasant-taste suppressing agent, deliquescence-suppressing agent, crystallization-suppressing agent for hardly water-soluble or water-insoluble substance, adhesion-suppressing agent, solubility-improving agent, cleaning agent, bed-bath agent, and oxidation-reduction suppressing agent, for metal ion compounds or products comprising the same.